  New $36 million Dali museum opens in Florida



**ST PETERSBURG: For a few hours Tuesday, this Florida city was transformed into a Surrealist canvas in honor of Salvador Dali, the genre's master.   
   A man wearing a large snail hat led a parade of drummers, who were followed by a phalanx of pirates past shimmering water and vibrant palm trees. Wild green parakeets fluttered in the air. Spanish royalty was on hand, as were several mayors, dozens of reporters and hundreds of art lovers.   
A number of people had attached pencil-thin Dali mustaches to their upper lips. Everyone gathered beneath a glass-and-concrete building - the new, $36-million museum that features a priceless collection of Dali's works.   
   It replaces the old Dali Museum, more than doubling the exhibition space and improving hurricane protection. It is considered the world's most comprehensive collection of Dali's work.   
   Princess Cristina of Spain, who is the duchess of Palma de Mallorca and the youngest daughter of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia, called the museum a "superb setting, a state of the art building'' that evokes the waves, magic and light of Dali's native Mediterranean sea.   
   The museum's signature architectural detail is a wave of glass paneling that undulates around the building \_ a striking feature that was designed by architect Yann Weymouth, who had a hand in creating the glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris.   
"The city of St. Petersburg gains a landmark and outstanding beacon of cultural beauty,'' the princess said.   
   Floridians believe the museum will be the centerpiece of an arts renaissance in the Tampa Bay area, which recently saw the renovation of a new museum of art in nearby Tampa and the opening of a gallery devoted to popular glassmaker Dale Chihuly in St. Petersburg. Officials said the Dali museum took 14 years from conception to ribbon-cutting. Because much of the fundraising and building happened in tough economic times, local officials say the community is clearly committed to the arts and the tourism it brings to the area.   
   "We overcame the difficulty of the economic times,'' said former St. Petersburg Mayor Bob Ullrich. "What you see before you today is the symbol of a resolute will of this community to create world class art museum for a world class art collection.''   
Dali, who was born and raised in Figueres, Spain, is best known for his surrealist paintings of melting clocks. Yet he was a classically trained painter whose art ranged from Old Master-style still lifes to religious iconography. A full range of his work can be seen at the St. Petersburg museum, including 7 of his 18 masterwork paintings.   
Jorge Dezcallar, the Spanish ambassador to the U.S., said the new museum will inspire a legacy of research and collaboration between the two countries.   
   "This is very befitting, in a land so closely linked to Spain,'' he said. "Dali's legend and legacy continue to live on. He would feel also at home in this building.''   
Much of the Dali Museum's art was collected by an Ohio couple - A. Reynolds and Eleanor Morse - who bought their first Dali painting in 1942 and then amassed nearly 100 of his works. The couple became so enamored with his creations that they eventually befriended Dali and his wife, Gala - who moved to the United States in the 1940s.   
   Decades later, the Morse collection took an improbable path to St. Petersburg. In 1980, a young St. Petersburg lawyer named Jim Martin read an article in the Wall Street Journal titled "U.S. Art World Dillydallies Over Dali;'' about how Mr. Morse wanted to find a home for his collection - and how he was willing to donate it for free as long as the venue would keep the artworks together.   
   Martin called Morse and urged him to consider St. Petersburg. The Morse family did, and the first museum was eventually built in 1980. "Sun and sand   and Dali sounded pretty good,'' Martin told a crowd of several hundred on Tuesday.**

[Salvador Dali Museum](http://vichernyshov.wikispaces.com/Salvador%20Dali%20Museum)

*-We could validly argue that all art enriches a community emotionally and intellectually and that the Dali, as probably the greatest single-artist museum in the United States, adds particular international luster to St. Petersburg.*

*-Museum statistics show about 200,000 people visit the Dali each year. About 180,000 are from outside the area, and more than 100,000 come specifically to see the museum. The museum estimates it generates about* ***$50-million for the local economy every year.***

***-****New museum is green. A rooftop passive solar energy system, for example, will help keep energy consumption in the 66,000-square-foot building the same as in its current location, which is less than half the size.*

*- New cafe will lead to a garden, part of which is being designed by Pinellas County math teachers with pavers placed in geometric patterns that illustrate mathematical concepts (which Dali loved) to be used as teaching tools. It's one small part of the educational possibilities at a museum that now hosts, for free, about 10,000 students each year. A student orientation area and theater in the new building will enhance visits for both children and adults.*



Wiki page by Vitaliy Chernyshov